

Four Seasons of Fun

Recreation opportunities plentiful in Michigan's state parks and state forests

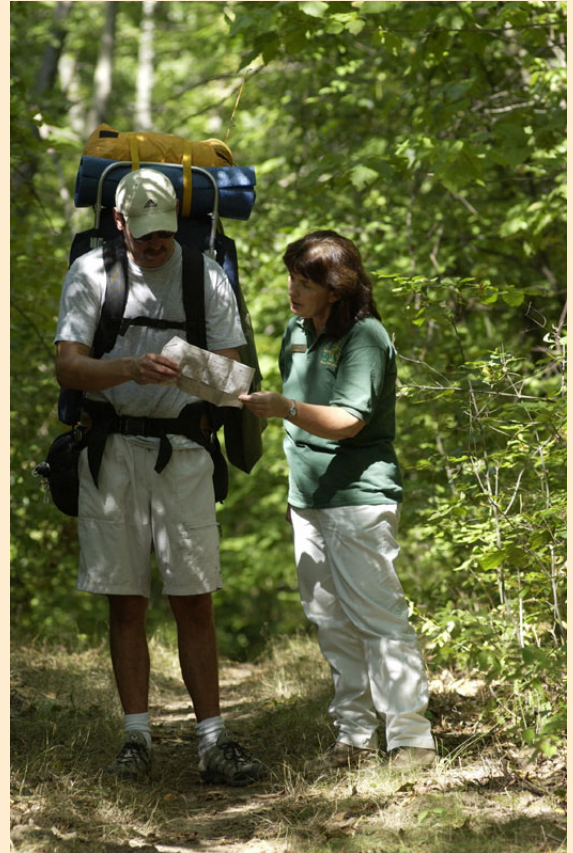
Michigan's state forests and state parks provide a diverse selection of recreation and camping options. The DNR is committed to the conservation, protection, management, use and enjoyment of the state's natural resources for current and future generations. The lands preserved in Michigan's premier state park and state forest systems are critical to the DNR's mission because they provide public access to four seasons of fun, outdoor recreation opportunities, all while enjoying Michigan's natural resources.

The DNR's Web site contains a wealth of information about recreation opportunities that allow you to search by specific features and amenities. Be sure to visit www.michigan.gov/dnrrecreationcamping for more detailed information and trail maps.



Trails and Pathways

Hiking, mountain biking, cross-country skiing, horseback riding, snowmobiling and off-road trail riding are among the options available on a state forest pathway or a state park trail. Many trails have a single or limited use during specific seasons so it's important to read signs on the trailheads and ask staff about regulations regarding specific trails and pathways. A forest pathway guide begins on Page 4. Picnicking, mushroom hunting, berry picking, wildlife viewing and hunting are added recreation staples along trails and pathways.



Waterways

With four Great Lakes touching our borders, 11,000 inland lakes and rivers, 7,000 miles of canoeable streams, 13,000 miles of trout waters and more than 700 boating access sites, water recreation is plentiful. Fishing, boating, canoeing, kayaking, waterskiing and tubing are just a small sampling of what's available. One of the fastest ways to find access to water recreation is to use the DNR's newest online resource, Michigan Recreational Boating Information System. Along with fish-stocking reports, maps, local water controls and accessibility

features, this resource was recognized nationally by the Michigan States Boating Organization in 2004 for its cutting-edge use of technology to make boating opportunities available for everyone. Check it out at www.mcqi.state.mi.us/MRBIS.



Let's go fishing

When you're on your way to a Michigan state park or state forest campground this year, don't forget to take your fishing gear along.

More than two-thirds of Michigan's 97 state parks and recreation areas feature good fishing opportunities, ranging from undeveloped shore access fishing to parks complete with fishing piers, boat rentals and universally accessible fishing sites.

Or if access to good fishing with lots of space between rustic campsites is what you're looking for, then the 145 state forest campgrounds are for you. All state forest campgrounds are located on a lake or river, providing excellent access to fishing and boating.



All you need is a fishing rod, tackle, bait and a Michigan fishing license. Youngsters under age 17 can fish for free.



Plenty of hunting opportunities, too

Anyone who has spent much time in Michigan's forests will recognize the important role forests play in maintaining the wildlife diversity that sets Michigan apart from other states. Healthy populations of deer, bear, turkey, grouse and furbearers thrive in our state forests, which provide millions of user-days for hunters each year.

Wildlife also abounds in state parks, from many species of small game to an abundance of waterfowl to big

game species, including white-tailed deer and black bear. More than 200,000 acres of park land are open to hunting during hunting seasons in designated areas.

When hunting or trapping, you must carry your license and the identification used to purchase that license. Small-game hunters can be licensed at age 12. Special deer hunting and waterfowl hunting opportunities also are available for youth 12-16. For more information, go to www.michigan.gov/dnr.

Fishing and hunting licenses available online

The DNR's e-license system gives anglers and hunters the option to purchase their fishing and hunting licenses online, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Just go to www.michigan.gov/dnr. This convenience is especially important to nonresident anglers who previously had to wait until they arrived in Michigan to purchase their license. They now can have their license in their fishing vest pocket or wallet before they leave home.



Camping

The 145 state forest campgrounds provide more than 3,000 campsites spread out over nearly four million acres. These rustic campgrounds rely on a self-registration system and sites are available on a first-come, first-served basis. All state forest campgrounds in the northern Lower and Upper Peninsulas are located on bodies of water, creating multiple water-based recreation opportunities. A campground and pathway directory begins on [Page 4](#).

These same recreation opportunities and more are available at Michigan's 97 state parks and recreation areas. State parks differ from state forest campgrounds in that they tend to be more developed and will support greater numbers of visitors. Although there are a handful of rustic camping options, most state parks offer modern and semi-modern camping amenities with electric hookups at most sites and toilet/shower buildings. Regular interpretive programming is available in more than 40 state parks, and visitor centers, museums and lighthouses can be found at parks throughout Michigan. Details about the services and amenities at each campground can be found in this publication, beginning on [Page 12](#).

State parks and state forests are more than just campgrounds. Anyone can visit to take a walk, go hunting or cast out a fishing line. Day-users of state parks and state forests have access to millions of acres of land in the woods, along lakeshores and riverbanks. These lands provide space and resources to enjoy a variety of outdoor recreation.

This guide is your resource to plenty of open space to enjoy these outdoor activities. And if you decide not to spend the night in a state park or state forest campground, there's still plenty to see and do while exploring Michigan's public lands.



Did you know?

- Michigan's 97 state parks host 25 million visitors annually and contribute more than \$460 million to the state's economy.
- Michigan DNR manages the largest state forest system in the continental U.S. (4 million acres).
- Michigan's state parks offer 13,000 campsites and another 3,000 rustic sites can be enjoyed in our state forest campgrounds.
- Michigan ranks 1st in licensed hunters (1 million) and 4th in licensed anglers (2 million).
- Hunting contributes \$2 billion annually to Michigan's economy and fishing contributes another \$1.4 billion.
- Michigan is framed by four Great Lakes, which contain 20% of the world's fresh water.
- Michigan has 11,000 inland lakes, 36,000 miles of rivers and streams and 3,000 miles of freshwater shoreline—more than any other state.
- Michigan has a public land base of nearly 8 million acres, the most of any state east of the Mississippi River.
- Michigan DNR manages 6 million acres of mineral estate and leases rights to explore for oil and gas.
- Michigan registers more boats (1 million) and snowmobiles (250,000) than any other state.

Thank you for visiting Michigan's state parks and state forests. All fees collected from camping and motor vehicle permits are returned to the state park and state forest systems so the DNR can continue to offer you quality recreation opportunities.

We care about what you think and value your input in developing programs that best serve the needs of the millions of customers who visit state parks and state forests. Please take a few minutes and share your comments with us. You can do this in several ways:

- 1) If you are in a state forest campground, your fee envelope provides a space for comments.
- 2) If you are in a state park, please complete a Report Card that evaluates your experiences and the resources most valuable to you.
- 3) If you have a question about our programs, visit our Web site and click on "Ask DNR."
- 4) Send comments or suggestions in an e-mail DNR-RecreationFeedback@michigan.gov